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Chapter IV

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While kinship has become an important topic among students of the late medieval nobility, it is only reluctantly discussed by historians dealing with the period's urban societies. This is, in part, a legacy of historiography. Historians of the European Middle Ages long tended to despise the nobility as a vestige of a waning age, while celebrating the period's urban citizenry as a pioneer of modernization. They also subscribed to the widely held assumption that kinship is important to traditional, but marginal to modern, social frameworks. The historiography of medieval cities has, much like the one on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, brought about excellent studies of the organization of the nuclear family,[1] but demonstrated less interest in wider networks of relationships that were constituted by descent and alliance.[2] To the extent that historians of medieval cities mention kinship organization at all, they often refer to it as a structure in the process of disintegrating, which they mainly attribute to effects of urban government. As exceptional entities in the context of a "feudal" order, cities relied on innovative legislation and advanced administrative bodies, in which power was distributed by elections rather than by direct inheritance. Such forms of government, a frequent argument goes, needed to break

the strong ties to highly coherent kingroups that are seen as characteristic of medieval society.[3]

Rather than to assume a natural antagonism between urban government and kinship, this chapter examines how medium- to high-ranking citizens relied on kinship in political as well as other arenas in the city of Bern in today's Switzerland.[4] My approach is to investigate singular interactions among kin that I trace in varied source material that includes private letters, chronicles, administrative records, and mandates. I discuss examples from the decades between 1440 and 1520 that, with due reservations, can be used as indicators of major changes in the organization and use of kinship between the Middle Ages and the early modern period.

With an estimated number of five thousand inhabitants, no bishop of its own, and a location off the major trade routes, late medieval Bern was, by most standards, a small and unimportant town.[5] In political terms, however, Bern gained considerable weight. As an imperial city, it was largely self-governed, and between the late fourteenth and the early sixteenth century, Bern conquered or purchased large areas of its surroundings from the regional nobility and built what eventually became the largest city-state north of the Alps, with a population of roughly eighty thousand inhabitants. The expansion of the territory went along with the establishment of an increasingly dense administrative organization headed by the city's council. This provided members of the city's elite with growing opportunities to sustain themselves as politicians, as the city's chatelains of rural districts, and as private owners of rural seigneuries under the city's overlordship. The particular situation of a small urban elite in charge of a large apparatus of territorial lordship accelerated two developments that were under way in most other European cities of the period. On the one hand, social mobility that had been considerable until about 1400 slowed down, while citizens' social and economic positions increasingly depended on holding office, political participation, and the use of "public" resources.[6] On the other hand, administrative institutions were strengthened and claimed to regulate ever more areas of life.[7] I will argue that both these developments were strongly interrelated with shifts in kinship-organization.

In what follows, I will first address contemporary normative conceptions of kinship and then lay out some general observations about the reliance on kinship in day-to-day practices and politics. Subsequently I will deepen a few observations by discussing two examples of how kinship was used. The first case concerns exchanges of political and other favors among merchants in the 1440s, and the second deals with a patrician's way of addressing kinship in a chronicle he wrote about his

life around 1520. Finally, I will address trends of the long-term development of kinship.

Two Conceptions of Kinship

Like many other European elites of the period, citizens of Bern used two distinct manners of family-reckoning, a broad bilateral one that included in-laws and a narrow one that was limited to lines of male decent.[8] The broad concept was usually referred to by the term, *fründ* (pl. *fründe*), that people used to address and describe almost anyone beyond the nuclear family to whom they were related by paternal or maternal descent or who belonged to a family into which they themselves, their siblings, or their children had married. The extensive use of one single term indicates a limited interest in distinguishing between consanguines and affines, generational orders, and degrees of kinship. A few more specific terms did exist, but were rarely employed. Thus, with regard to men, *fründ* was occasionally replaced by the barely more specific term *vetter* that designates a cousin in modern German, but around 1500, could refer to uncles, nephews, or in-laws as well. Contemporaries did, however, far more than modern German speakers emphasize particularly close relationships to selected members of their extended kin by addressing them in the terminology of the nuclear family, for example, as "my brother" or "my sister."[9]

Such a kin-conception that was not only bilateral, but also included in-laws, was in accordance with the city's inheritance patterns. All sons and daughters had a right to an equal share of their deceased parents' property, and spouses had a lot of leeway to delay the devolution of property to the next generation by bequeathing it to each other.[10] Thus, each marriage and each death entailed major divisions and mergers of property. Passing estates from one generation to the next required intensive cooperation—and frequently entailed fierce conflict—among spouses, in-laws, and siblings who had to engage in temporary co-ownership, liquidate goods to compensate each other, or agree to receiving shares in the form of acknowledgements of debt. From the perspective of property, *fründe* appear as overlapping networks of people who, in frequently shifting constellations, were likely to hold stakes in the same property—if not in the present, then in the near past or future.

In the course of the fifteenth century and first among leading families, a different, more narrow conception of kinship referred to as *geschlecht* or *stamm* was ever more frequently invoked. This conception was patrilinear; affiliation in it was passed on from fathers to sons only,

while it stressed the perception that women were exchanged between kingroups through marriage. Such lineages did not overlap, but were strictly delineated groups that persisted over generations. Although the bilateral and the patrilineal conception of kinship seem incompatible, they rarely conflicted because they were invoked in different situations. Groups of actually interacting kin were consistently referred to as *fründe*, whereas the *geschlecht* was more of an abstract entity that its members invoked to make claims to status, honor, and political privilege. Contemporaries associated both concepts of kinship with strong obligations. In private letters and oral statements recorded in court protocols, citizens of Bern kept stressing that kin owed each other unconditional support in all kinds of situations and had to avoid disagreement.

Kinship in Day-to-day Cooperation and Government Procedure

Norms demanding solidarity among kin were largely uncontested in theory, but the fact that they were constantly invoked had everything to do with the inconsistency with which they were adhered to in practice.[11] The large majority of recorded normative statements about kin-solidarity were made by kin who admonished each other to live up to normative standards or complained about others' failure to do so. Although the ways in which kin really interacted were enormously varied, a few observations apply quite generally. As opposed to widely held notions about the importance of the household unit and the authority of house-fathers in premodern Europe,[12] the coherence within the nuclear core of the family seems to have been rather weak. The arrangement of marriages, for example, was controlled less by the parents than by a large number of more remote kin and nonrelated acquaintances. Fathers who claimed the right to make decisions about the education, careers, and activities of their sons and daughters in their twenties were frequently faced with disobedient children who pursued different plans without facing the impairing social sanctions this would have entailed in many elite groups of the early modern period.[13]

Both in trade, politics, and everyday routines, citizens of Bern tended to cooperate with individuals that they picked selectively and for rather short periods of time from a wide range of remote kin as well as from among other acquaintances. In situations of material need, people might first turn to one of their numerous *fründe*, but actual help was quite as likely to result from subsequent requests to wealthy neighbors, landlords, or friends of friends. In contrast to what came to apply in the

region in the early modern period, and especially in the nineteenth century, parents chose mostly outsiders to their kin as godparents for their children.[14] To the extent that kin cooperated, they distributed roles, such as the ones of leaders or followers, less according to the succession of generations or the order of birth than in function of situational contexts and the participants' positions outside their kin group. Political factions amalgamated around high-ranking officers and trade-networks around particularly wealthy merchants. In many areas, actual cooperation among kin and among nonkin were very similar. Much like patrons and clients without kinship ties,[15] kin of unequal status constantly negotiated the terms of their cooperation and uninhibitedly expressed their expectation to receive a favor in return for every favor they granted.[16] Such relationships were established or intensified when they promised to be mutually beneficial, perpetuated over a few years, rather than several decades, and loosened again to give way to other constellations.

Although kingroups were permeable to outsiders and resembled other groups as to their interior structures, the importance of kinship in late medieval Bern should not be underestimated. Not only did property relationships compel kin to engage and dispute with each other time and again, but the city's rapidly growing government system also relied heavily on conceptions of kinship in order to define who belonged to whom and who was responsible for whom. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, kinship was already used to regulate procedures of the city council. This council, simultaneously serving as the legislative, executive, and jurisdictional power of the city, was practically the only institution that could make legally binding decisions. Understandably, citizens frequently had a reason to show up in its meetings, be it to complain about each other's misdeeds, to beg for material support, to demand clemency, to ask to be appointed to an office, or to complain about other officers.[17] For all these purposes, petitioners were supposed to present their cases in the company of a group of bilateral kin who also served as mediators between the council and individuals when it came to enforcing decisions. Even among the council members themselves, open partisanship was only considered legitimate as long as it followed lines of kinship.

Moreover, petitioners made their case by reminding the council of their merits in the form of favors they themselves and past or present members of their patrilineal kin had done to the city by serving in offices, participating in wars, or lending money to the city. Accordingly, the council frequently justified decisions concerning individuals by referring to the degree to which the city owed gratitude to their lineages. Both contemporary conceptions thus played an important role in

the council politics—the bilateral one on a procedural level and the patrilinear one on an argumentative level. In a way, such regulations simply mirrored the high esteem for norms of kinship solidarity that contemporaries expressed in other contexts as well, if not in deeds, than in words. The specific dynamics of political, legal, and administrative procedure, however, strengthened the actual enforcement of such norms beyond what was usual in less formalized circumstances. And as government activity increased over time, the compelling character of such norms made itself felt in a growing number of situations.

Obtaining Support from Powerful Kin

The many ways in which reliance on kinship in government affairs reflected back on a wider array of interactions can best be captured through individual examples. The first case I would like to take up can be traced in a collection of accidentally preserved letters that were addressed to Peter Schopfer and written between 1438 and 1445.[18] During this period, Schopfer, a senior council member, served a term as the city's representative in one of the territory's districts that was located about thirty kilometers south of Bern in the Alps and included the small town of Thun. Like many of Bern's influential politicians of the first half of the fifteenth century, Peter Schopfer was also a wealthy merchant. He combined office-holding with participation in a prominent trade association with numerous agencies between southern Germany and Catalonia.[19] Many of two hundred extant letters Schopfer received were from his kin back in Bern who provided him with news about markets and politics, begged him for small and large favors, and asked him to help them bring personal problems to the attention of the city council. Some of Schopfer's kin addressed him in an intimate and informal tone and referred to regular mutual visits, while the letters of others abounded with marks of respect and polite phrases, or even indicate very infrequent interactions. Thus, one nephew made a rather fruitless attempt to get Schopfer to support his application for the post of the city's schoolmaster, but mixed up his uncle's first name, whom he addressed as "Hans"—rather than Peter—"Schopfer, my particularly dear good *fründ*."[20]

An interesting relationship to zero in on is the one to Hans Kramer, an elderly grocer who is represented by fourteen letters, at least six of which he wrote within a few weeks. Kramer alternatively addressed Schopfer as *fründ*, brother, or *vetter*, but was his in-law, probably the husband of a sister of Schopfer's deceased first wife. The two men

made straightforward arrangements for a plot of land that Kramer's wife and Schopfer's son had inherited together.[21] They also did business with each other; Schopfer sold oil to Kramer that he probably got from south of the Alps, while Kramer sold him iron from Bern to retail in Thun. They worked on separate accounts, but seem to have gotten along very well and constantly asked and granted each other small favors. Before buying an exceptionally inexpensive load of oil from a third party, Kramer made sure that Schopfer found buyers for his oil. In return, Kramer could expect Schopfer to keep oil in reserve for him to buy so he would not run out of supply should his Christmas sales go well.[22]

Against this background, Schopfer's reluctant response to another of Kramer's requests comes as a surprise at first. When one of Kramer's sons unexpectedly died, he found out that his daughter in-law was hurrying to collect money from the debtors of her deceased husband. Kramer feared that she intended to leave the city with the money in order to remarry, without giving her children their share.[23] When Kramer asked Schopfer to take his grandchildren's case up with Bern's city council, his letters took on an unprecedented deferential tone. He had to repeat this request in no less than five successive, increasingly desperate-sounding letters, and ultimately even offered to pay for Schopfer's travel.[24] Kramer wrote that he was too old and too inexperienced with politics to talk in a meeting of the council, that his wife had such a toothache that she could not leave their house, and that they had no other kin to turn to in this matter. He flattered his kinsman by saying that the council would be more moved by a single word spoken by Schopfer than by an entire Sunday sermon presented by an old man like himself. While Kramer and Schopfer, in dealing with a common inheritance and in trade, had found areas in which they easily cooperated to their mutual benefit, they were very unequal partners in the domain of politics. Kramer admitted that he was in no position to return a political favor, but reminded Schopfer that the grandchildren themselves would grow up and come to understand that they owed him for his help.

After several fruitless requests, Kramer brought up an additional argument that seems to have been the one that changed his kinsman's mind. Kramer reported that "everybody" in Bern, "rich and poor" gave him the advice to have Schopfer deal with the case, and that many people began to rumor that Schopfer was neglecting his kin.[25] Kramer thus referred to the period's equivalent of a public opinion that demanded that Schopfer live up to the norms of kin solidarity. From the last in the series of Kramer's letters we learn not only that

Schopfer brought the case of the semi-orphans to the city council after all, but also how this entailed a transition from equality to hierarchy in the relationship between the two men. Now Kramer complained that Schopfer had traveled to Bern to talk in the council without stopping by at his house to tell him how the case was developing, and whenever he asked other people, they refused to tell him without Schopfer himself being present.[26]

The letter exchanges between Peter Schopfer and his kin illustrate several points. The constantly invoked norms demanding unconditional kin-solidarity did by no means automatically translate into corresponding practices. The actual manners, in which kin interacted on a daily basis, rather were subject to constant negotiations about a quid pro quo in the exchange of favors. A greater pressure to act or to appear to be acting in accordance with norms of unconditional kin-solidarity was primarily felt in public domains and matters of government. There, agreements could not solely be based on juxtapositions of individual interests of the moment, but rather had to be legitimized by rules of a more general character, such as the obligation of kin-groups to assume a representative function in advocating each other's cases.[27] Habitual relationships among kin frequently had to be reconfigured in order to meet the specific requirements of government procedures, which quite frequently implied that people who had previously interacted on equal terms developed relationships that were nearly extensions of the hierarchical and authoritarian structures inherent to government institutions.

Keeping Account of Merits

The second case takes us to the 1520s, when Ludwig, a member of the prominent patrician lineage von Diesbach, wrote a memoir-like chronicle about his and his *geschlecht*'s past.[28] This manuscript of about forty-five pages was meant to be a continuation of a now lost volume about the lineage's history that Ludwig's uncle had written a few decades earlier. In his preface, Ludwig declared his intention to write about "those who have been good and those who have been bad to me, so that my children and their descendants, for better and for worse, will know how to act accordingly."[29] In what follows, Ludwig presents less a coherent account of his life than a list of unrelated experiences. Much like in contemporary bookkeeping, almost each of the chronicle's entries begins with the word "item," but also leads into an assessment of who had incurred a debt of gratitude toward Ludwig's *geschlecht* and to

whom its members should remain grateful. Such reports added up to a hoard of merits of the kind citizens used when negotiating with the city council or with other individuals and wanted to justify their demands as claims to favors in return.

Ludwig's chronicle extensively elaborates on the financial and emotional sacrifices he took upon himself to serve his city. Lengthy descriptions of events during Ludwig's youth that he spent as a page at the court of the French king Louis XI demonstrate how the king developed an ever-higher esteem for Ludwig and his lineage. This reputation, Ludwig argues, permitted him to broker favorable treaties for the city, when he later returned to the king as an ambassador of Bern.[30] He makes the intention behind such arguments explicit when explaining why he agreed to serve a term as the city's chatelain in a remote part of the territory. Four of the highest-ranking officers of Bern, he writes, had come to his home and promised that if he accepted this office, the city would not be oblivious of its debt of gratitude both toward Ludwig himself and his offspring. At this point, Ludwig addressed his children directly: "Therefore, my children, do not forget to remind the authorities of their promise whenever you are presented with an occasion."[31]

In addition to drawing an account of merits, Ludwig made the case that he himself, rather than other members of his lineage, was the most reliable guardian of its best interests. In this particular respect, Ludwig's writing indicates tensions between the patrilinear conception of kinship that determined an individual's honor and political prerogatives and the bilateral one that corresponded to inheritance patterns and was supposed to regulate day-to-day cooperation. Ludwig was particularly prone to emphasize his patriline's best interests when writing about conflicts that had opposed him to other members of the Diesbach family in manners that were symptomatic of the period's inheritance system. For example, Ludwig relates how he overcame his older brother's stubborn resistance against dividing their deceased father's estate. This allowed him to compensate his wife's siblings for letting him succeed to the rural seigneury of his parents-in-law so that he could add a prestigious domain to his lineage's patrimony. Ludwig concluded by stating that the Diesbach lineage had incurred a debt of gratitude towards his wife and her family who supported him against his brother.[32] In another case, he admonished his descendants to remain grateful to his second wife. She had helped him win a legal battle against his sons from his first marriage who had claimed shares of their mother's inheritance and allegedly had done so with "indecent words and gestures."[33] Such narratives indicate how strongly Ludwig's social status, and in particular his position relative to his patrilinear kin, depended on arrangements he made with his wives and in-laws, many of whom he called "my brother" and "my sister."[34]

While Ludwig acknowledged the importance of his wives and in-laws, they had no permanent place in his lineage defined by a linear succession from fathers to sons. Ludwig's attempt to assess every turn of his life under the aspect of how it contributed to the status of his lineage was undoubtedly inspired by dynastic representations of the family in the period's nobility.[35] But his heavy investment in a patrilinear vision of kinship was just as clearly related to the workings of the city's communal political system, in which prerogatives were traded for merits. Ascribing merits to the *geschlecht* that remained unaffected by the constant fission and fusion caused by marriages allowed for accumulating them over decades and passing them on from one generation to the next. Merits could thus be treated as a kind of family-patrimony, an intangible capital convertible into legal and political privileges, which made patrilines an important basis of a stable system of ranks.

Dynamics of Change

In a development that began no later than the fifteenth century and continued far into the early modern period, family conceptions and norms demanding family coherence were integrated into a rapidly growing number of legal and administrative regulations. The use of kinship as an organizing principle had characterized procedures of the city council early on and was successively adopted in additional areas as diverse as taxation, relief for the poor,[36] or, to use a particularly telling example, sumptuary laws. The latter were primarily issued and revised in order to prevent citizens from overspending on representative clothing, jewelry, and celebrations. One thing such laws frequently limited was the circle of people that could be invited to baptisms, weddings, and other celebrations. Rather than indicating plain maximal numbers, such legislation delineated the types of relationship that made participation in such celebrations legitimate. Thus the council regulated the commemorative walks to the graves of recently deceased citizens that had used to be attended by large numbers of women. The first ordinance concerning this matter, issued as early as 1370, stated that participation in these walks should henceforth be limited to kin (*fründe*), and at most, two female neighbors.[37] Subsequent laws further narrowed the scope of legitimate participants, until a version of the early sixteenth century admitted "close kin" only.[38] Another series of laws regulated the carnival custom to visit each other's houses in order to be served cake.

A first, still quite tolerant mandate issued in the mid fifteenth century only forbade citizens to ask for cake from people who had not invited them.[39] A more strict mandate from 1522 stipulated penalties for offering cake to anyone but kin.[40] Quite consistently, this legislation aimed ever more at converting festivities that had used to bring together a broad range of acquaintances into family celebrations.

An increased reliance on kinship was not only increasingly mandated, but also further enhanced by political and social transformations. As government institutions got involved in the organization of broader and broader fields of urban life, citizens more often came under pressure to mobilize their bilateral kin as their representative supporters. At the same time, social hierarchies became less permeable,[41] which is likely to have given greater weight to family inheritance and family cooperation. The patriciate closed off and was increasingly successful at monopolizing the city's highest and most rewarding offices. Around 1500, members of leading families such as Ludwig von Diesbach still took great pains to justify claims to political privileges by recollecting their own and their ancestors' merits. By the early seventeenth century, the city council passed legislation that listed a few patrilines to which eligibility to higher offices should once and for all be reserved.[42] This development went along with an increasing emphasis on patrilinearity that began toward the end of the fifteenth century, when ever more *geschlechter* adopted coats of arms, established common burial sites, built their own chapels, and endowed their own pious foundations.[43] The emphasis on patrilineal, rather than bilateral, conceptions of kinship implied a greater stress on the pursuit of coherent family strategies over the long term, on the preservation of a patrimony of tangible and intangible goods, on mechanisms of permanent inclusion and exclusion, and on internal hierarchies. Kinship acquired qualities that allowed its use—attested in many social setting of the early modern period[44]—as an important substrate for new, more long-lasting kinds of patron-client relationships.

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To sum up, the examples from Bern do not indicate that the expansion of urban government weakened rigidly organized kin groups. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, cooperation among kin was not structured by tightly organized, stable formations, but rather, selective formations, determined by individual interests of the moment, and subject to calculating negotiations about how favors were to be returned—in spite of constant invocations of norms about unconditional support for kin. More than anywhere else, pressure to abide by such norms was

enhanced in the context of government institutions. Here, conceptions and norms of kinship increasingly assumed the function of rules that in a generally applicable, apparently objective, manner determined who was responsible for whom. Prescriptions to cooperate among kin according to the bilateral conception attempted to bring more predictability into contemporary practices of exchanging favors with frequently changing members of extended networks. And the emergence of stable divisions of rank went along with a growing emphasis on patrilinearity, which permitted an individual's political prerogatives to be determined through his affiliation with a clearly delineated stable group that could accumulate status over generations. The emergence of more coherent kinship practices and the expansion of government went hand in hand. This was due only in part to authorities' intentional attempts at disciplining the population. More importantly, individuals engaged in countless strategies of realigning and reinterpreting kinship relationships in manners that helped them assert themselves vis-à-vis the new institutional organization of urban society.

Notes

1. Studies that examine the nuclear family with some consideration for wider kinship networks include Martha C. Howell, *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries 1300–1550* (Chicago, 1998); Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *La maison et le nom. Stratégies et rituels dans l'Italie de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1990); Alfred Haverkamp, ed., *Haus und Familie in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt* (Köln, 1984).
2. Important exceptions are: Christian Maurel, "Stuctures familiales et solidarités lignagères à Marseille au XVe siècle: autour de l'ascension sociale des Forbin," *Annales ESC* 41 (1986): pp. 658–82; Francis William Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori, and Rucellati* (Princeton, 1977); Jacques Heers, *Le clan familial* (Paris, 1974).
3. Ultimately, this argument can be at least traced back to Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch.* Neudruck der Urausgabe, ed. Konrad Hoffmann (Stuttgart, 1985), in particular, p 93. It has been further developed by: Heers, *Clan familial*, pp. 129–35, 265; Philippe Braunstein, "L'émergence de l'individu: Approche de l'intimité, XIVè-XVè siècle," in *Histoire de la vie privée. Vol. 2: De l'Europe féodale à la Renaissance*, ed. Georges Duby (Paris, 1985), pp. 526–619; Gerhard Dilcher, "The City Community as an Instance in the European Process of Individualization," in *The Individual in Political Theory and Practice*, ed. Janet Coleman (Oxford, 1996), pp. 281–302.

4. This article is an attempt to relate results of research that I have presented in greater detail in previous publications, including Simon Teuscher, *Bekannte—Klienten—Verwandte. Soziabilität und Politik in der Stadt Bern um 1500* (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 1998); idem, "Parenté, politique et comptabilité. Chroniques familiales du Sud de l'Allemagne et de la Suisse autour de 1500," *Annales HSS* 59 (2003): pp. 847–58; idem, "Chains of Favour. Approaching the City Council in Late Medieval Berne," in *Petizioni, gravamina e suppliche nella prima età moderna in Europa (secoli XV-XVIII)*, ed. Cecilia Nubola and Andreas Würgler (Berlin, Bologna, 2004), pp. 311–28.
5. The most recent introduction to Bern in the late Middle Ages is Ellen J. Beer et al., eds., *Berns grosse Zeit. Das 15. Jahrhundert neu entdeckt* (Bern, 1999).
6. Hans Conrad Peyer, "Die Schweizer Wirtschaft im Umbruch in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts," in *500 Jahre Stanser Verkommnis. Beiträge zu einem Zeitbild*, ed. Ferdinand Elsener et al. (Stans, 1981), pp. 59–70; Hans Conrad Peyer, "Die Anfänge der schweizerischen Aristokratien," in *Luzerner Patriziat. Sozial- und wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Studien zur Entwicklung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Kurt Messmer and Peter Hoppe (Luzern, 1976), pp. 1–28.
7. Christian Hesse, "Expansion und Ausbau. Das Territorium Berns und seine Verwaltung im 15. Jahrhundert," in *Berns grosse Zeit*, ed. Beer et al., pp. 330–47.
8. Teuscher, *Bekannte*, pp. 75–84. Cf. Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, Régine Le Jean, and Joseph Morsel, "Familles et parents. De l'histoire de la famille à l'anthropologie de la parenté," in *Les tendances actuelles de l'historie du Moyen Âge en France et en Allemagne*, ed. Jean-Claude Schmidt and Otto Gerhard Oexle (Paris, 2002), pp. 433–46; Joseph Morsel, "Geschlecht als Repräsentation. Beobachtungen zur Verwandtschaftskonstruktion im fränkischen Adel des späten Mittelalters," in *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen. Texte—Bilder—Objekte*, ed. Otto Gerhard Oexle and Andrea von Hülsen-Esch (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 259–325; Karl-Heinz Spiess, *Familie und Verwandtschaft im deutschen Hochadel des Spätmittelalters. 13. bis Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 494–531; Maurel, *Structures*.
9. Similar observations in Spiess, *Familie*, p. 499.
10. Friedrich E. Welti, ed., *Rechtsquellen des Kantons Bern. Stadtrechte*. Vol. I and II: *Das Stadtrecht von Bern*, 2nd ed. (Aarau, 1971), pp. 53–57. The most comprehensive analysis of the development of inheritance law in Bern is still spread out over several sections in Eugen Huber, *System und Geschichte des Schweizerischen Privatrechts* (Basel, 1886–1893). For a recent approach to a neighboring city with a very similar legal framework: Thomas Weibel, *Erbrecht und Familie: Fortbildung und Aufzeichnung des Erbrechts in der Stadt Zürich, vom Richtebrief zum Stadtrecht von 1716* (Zürich, 1986).
11. This section summarizes results concerning kinship in Teuscher, *Bekannte*.
12. Probably the most influential one of the studies to have made this point is Otto Brunner, "'Das Ganze Haus' und die alteuropäische 'Ökonomik,'" in *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. Otto Brunner (Göttingen, 1980), pp. 103–27. For critical discussions of Brunner's notions and their reception: Claudia Opitz, "Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte? Ein kritischer Blick auf Otto Brunners Konzept des 'ganzen Hauses'," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): pp. 88–98; David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 88–101.
13. Cf., for example, the contribution of Christophe Duhamelle in this volume and Heinz Reif, "Väterliche Gewalt und 'kindliche Narrheit.' Familienkonflikte im katholischen Adel Westfalens vor der französischen Revolution," in *Die Familie in der Geschichte*, ed. Heinz Reif (Göttingen, 1982), pp. 82–113.
14. Erika Welti, *Taufbräuche im Kanton Zürich. Eine Studie über ihre Entwicklung bei Angehörigen der Landeskirche seit der Reformation* (Zürich, 1967); Abbé Berthet, "Un réactif social: le parrainage du XVIe à la révolution. Nobles, bourgeois et paysans dans un bourg perché du Jura," *Annales ESC* 1 (1946): pp. 43–50.
15. Teuscher, *Bekannte*, pp. 135–79.
16. For a broader perspective on notions of exchange in late medieval urban societies of the region, cf. Valentin Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts: Presents and Politics at the End of the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2000).
17. For a more in-depth analysis of these procedures, cf. Teuscher, "Chains of Favor."
18. Regarding these letters, cf. Simon Teuscher, "Bernische Privatbriefe aus der Zeit um 1500. Überlegungen zu ihren zeitgenössischen Funktionen und zu Möglichkeiten ihrer historischen Auswertung," in *Mittelalterliche Literatur im Lebenszusammenhang*, ed. Conrad Eckart Lutz (Freiburg [Schweiz], 1997), pp. 359–85. On comparable letter collections from cities of the region: Mathias Beer, *Eltern und Kinder des späten Mittelalters in ihren Briefen. Familienleben in der Stadt des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Nürnbergs (1400–1550)* (Nürnberg, 1990).
19. Hektor Ammann, *Die Diesbach-Watt-Gesellschaft* (St. Gallen, 1928).
20. Burgerarchiv Thun, Thuner Missiven II 261, for Schopfer's lukewarm reaction, cf. ibid. II 680.
21. In several of the letters, Kramer shifts back and forth between these terms: Thuner Missiven 666, 676, 682.
22. Thuner Missiven 671, 676.
23. The type of conflict Kramer feared was indeed frequent. As in many places during the period, Bern had a system that presented a widow with children with two alternatives. She could either refrain from remarrying, stay with the children on her husband's estate, and retain the right to its usufruct, or she could remarry, in which case she had to divide her husband's estate with the children and had to renounce her right to bring them up. The dilemmas this legal situation entailed are addressed in the chapter by Giulia Calvi in this volume and vividly described in Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "The Griselda Complex," in *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Chicago, 1985), pp. 213–46.
24. Thuner Missiven 660, 664, 666, 668, 682.
25. Thuner Missiven 668.
26. Thuner Missiven 665.
27. The distinction between a representative kin that one had to recur to for official purposes and the habitual kin that exchanged favors on a daily basis has been developed by Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle* (Geneva, 1972), pp. 71—80.
28. For this genre, cf. the series of articles on "écriture et mémoire familiale" *Annales HSS* 59 (2004): pp 785–858; Raul Mordenti, *I libri di famiglia in Italia: Geografia e storia* (Rome, 2001), vol. 2; Pierre Monnet, *Les Rohrbach de Francfort. Pouvoirs, affaires et parenté à l'aube de la Renaissance allemande* (Geneva, 1997), pp. 115–215.
29. The text is edited in Urs Martin Zahnd, *Die autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen Ludwig von Diesbachs. Studien zur spätmittelalterlichen Selbstdarstellung im oberdeutschen Raume* (Bern, 1986), pp. 26–115, here p. 26.
30. Zahnd, *Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 82–84.

31. Zahnd, *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 86.
32. Zahnd, *Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 72–76.
33. Zahnd, *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 112–14.
34. For example, Zahnd, *Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 88ff.
35. Cf. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres: essai sur l'imaginaire médiéval de la parenté* (Paris, 2000).
36. Teuscher, *Bekannte*, pp. 84–94.
37. Welti, ed. *Rechtsquellen Bern*, vol. I and II, pp. 162 (no. 205), 327 (no. 232).
38. Rudolf Steck and Gustav Tobler, ed., *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Berner Reformation 1521–1532* (Bern, 1918–1923), vol. 1, p. 89 (no. 344).
39. Friedrich E. Welti, ed., *Rechtsquellen Bern*, vol. I and II, p. 432 (no. 400) (Bern 1971).
40. Steck and Tobler, ed., *Aktensammlung*, vol. 1, p. 14 (no. 68) (Bern 1918–1923).
41. Peyer, "Anfänge," pp. 16–18.
42. Hermann Rennefahrt, ed., *Rechtsquellen des Kantons Bern. Stadtrechte.* Vol. V: *Verfasung und Verwaltung des Staates Bern* (Aarau, 1959), p 367f..
43. Citizens adopted almost all of the representative devices used by lineages of the lower nobility as discussed by Morsel, "Geschlecht als Repräsentation." A comparable investigation for the city of Bern remains to be conducted, but important elements are gathered in Luc Mojon, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Bern. Vol. 4: Das Berner Münster* (Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz) (Basel, 1960).
44. Cf. Wolfgang Reinhard, "Oligarchische Verflechtung und Konfession in oberdeutschen Städten," in *Klientelsysteme im Europa der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Antoni Maczak (München, 1988), pp. 47–62; Ulrich Pfister, "Politischer Klientelismus in der frühneuzeitlichen Schweiz," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 42 (1992): pp. 28–60; Gérard Delille, "Echanges matrimoniaux entre lignées alternées et système européen de l'alliance: un premier approche," in *En substances. Textes pour Françoise Héritier*, ed. Jean-Luc Jamard, Emmanuel Terray, and Margarita Xanthakou (Paris, 2000), pp. 219–52.